

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CU-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-02

/042 W

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P 161255Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2756

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1589

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CE

SUBJ ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE'S VISIT

1. LOUISE LAZAROFF, ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE FROM SAN FRANCISCO, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AND AID REPRESENTATIVE KANRICH MAY 16 TO DISCUSS REVIVAL OF ASIA FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES IN SRI LANKA. FIRST WORD EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED OF LAZAROFF VISIT WAS HAND-WRITTEN LETTER FROM LAZAROFF TO AID REPRESENTATIVE, RECEIVED ON EVE OF HIS ARRIVAL, IN WHICH HE SAID HE PLANNED VISIT COLOMBO AS PART OF ASIA FOUNDATION'S RESUMING SUPPORT TO SELECTED INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY, BUT ON A NON-RESIDENT BASIS".

2. LAZAROFF, WHO WAS ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE IN SRI LANKA 1959-62, TLD AMBASSADOR AND AID REPRESENTATIVE THAT FOUNDATION HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED IN THIS DIRECTION BY AID/WASHINGTON. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER AID OFFICIALS HAD CONSULTED STATE DEPARTMENT. LAZAROFF WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT, IN ADVANCE OF HIS ARRIVAL IN COLOMBO, HE HAD CORRESPONDED WITH FORMER FRIENDS HERBERT TENNEKON CHAIRMAN OF CENTRAL BANK, AND RALPH DERANIYAGALA, FORMER CLERK OF NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY. PREVIOUS DAY (MAY 16) HAD DISCUSSED WITH BOTH TENNEKON AND DERANIYAGALA, AS WELL AS SAM WIJESINHA, INCUMBENT CLERK OF NSA, PROPOSES FOR RESUMING

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FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES. TENNEKON HAD SUGGESTED

HE SEE ACTING PRIME MINISTER MAITHRIPALA SENANAYEKE, WHOM LAZAROFF HAD ALSO KNOWN PREVIOUSLY. LAZAROFF CONTACTED SENANAYEKE AND HAS ARRANGED MEETING WITH HIM MORNING MAY 17.

3. AMBASSADOR TOLD LAZAROFF THAT, IN HIS JUDGMENT, ASIA FOUNDATION HAD PERFORMED SOME VERY VALUABLE WORK IN SRI LANKA AND WAS STILL WELL-REMEMBERED IN MANY QUARTERS. HOWEVER, PRESENT UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT HAD ATTACKED FOUNDATION'S ACTIVITIES DURING 1970 ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND, AS LAZAROFF WAS AWARE, HAD ASKED FOR FOUNDATION TO CLOSE UP ITS OPERATIONS ON MID-1970. IN VIEW BANDARANAIKE GOVERNMENTS SENSITIVITY TOWARD THESE EARLIER ACTIVITIES, HE WAS FRANKLY SURPRISED THAT LAZAROFF HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED TO VISIT COLOMBO WITHOUT CHECK HAVING FIRST BEEN MADE WITH STATE DEPT AND WITH EMBASSY. NOTING THAT LAZAROFF HAD MET WITH NUMBER OF OLD FRIENDS PREVIOUS DAY AND HAD ARRANGED MEET WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER FOLLOWING DAY, AMB SAID PREFERRED PROCEDURE WOULD BE TO HAVE DISCUSSED MATTER WITH EMBASSY IN ADVANCE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW LAZAROFF'S EXPLANATION THAT 85 PERCENT OF ASIA FOUNDATION'S FUNDS CAME FROM US GOVERNMENT SOURCES (AID AND CU).

4. AMB THEN SAID THAT, BECAUSE OF CURRENT DELICATE POLITICAL SITUATION, IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY GSL, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD APPROVE RESUMPTION ASIA FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES. IT WAS AGREED THAT SINCE LAZAROFF HAD PREVIOUSLY KNOWN SENANAYEKE IT WOULD BE AWKWARD TO CANCEL APPOINTMENT FOLLOWING MORNING, BUT AMB SPECIFICALLY ASKED LAZAROFF NOT TO MAKE ANY REQUEST TO SENANAYEKE FOR ASIA FOUNDATION REINSTATEMENT.

5. COMMENT: AS NOTED BY AMB'S REMARKS TO LAZAROFF, WE FIND IT SOMEWHAT EXTRAORDINARY THAT HE SHOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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ARRIVE IN COLOMBO AND ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER WITHOUT EMBASSY EITHER BEING INFORMED OR CONSULTED IN ADVANCE. WOULD APPRECIATE SOONEST INFO FROM DEPT AS TO HOW THIS UNUSUAL VISITATION DEVELOPED. WE ARE HAVING ENOUGH PROBLEMS AT PRESENT SO PLEASE PROTECT US FROM OUR UNANNOUNCED AND UNGUIDED FRIENDS.

VAN HOLLEN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: woolflhd
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COLOMB01589
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750175-0198
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750541/aaaablbi.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: woolflhd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 AUG 2003 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <05 DEC 2003 by woolflhd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASIA FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE'S VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CE, ASIA FOUNDATION, (LAZAROFF, LOUISE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006